

12/17/98
JCS58 U.S. PTO

Case Docket No. 3557 US

Express mailing label No. EI750168317US
Deposited December 17, 1998

THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS

Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

This a request for an application under 37 CFR 1.53

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of
Inventor(s) Peter Brandt, et al

For: Display unit

Enclosed are:

- [X] 10 pages, Abstract, specification, claims, unsigned declaration (2 pages)
- [X] 3 soft A4 size sheets of drawings attached to application (Figs. 1-6)
- [X] Filing without fee or Declaration under 37 CFR 1.53(f)
- [X] Express Mail mailing label no. on all filed papers
- [] A certified copy of a German Patent Application
- [X] Preliminary Amendment
- [] Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449

Claims as Filed

| | NUMBER FILED | NUMBER EXTRA | RATE | BASIC FEE \$760.00 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------|-----------------------|
| TOTAL CLAIMS | 15 -20= | 0 | \$18 | 0 |
| INDEPENDENT CLAIMS | 1 -3= | 0 | \$78 | 0 |
| Surcharge fee for filing under 1.53(f) | | | | \$130.00 |
| | | | | \$890.00 |

- [] The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any/or additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Account No.
- [X] CLAIM IS HEREBY MADE OF THE BENEFIT OF THE FILING DATE OF THE German Patent Application No. 197 58 383.0 filed December 23, 1997 UNDER 35 USC 119.

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Express Mail mailing label No. EI750168317US
Deposited December 17, 1998

USA Patent Application

Peter Brandt, et al

Display unit

Priority: German Patent Application
197 58 383.0 filed December 23, 1997

Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

S I R :

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Please amend this application simultaneously with filing as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

APPLICATION PAGES 8-9

before claim 1, change "Patent claims" to --WE CLAIM:--

The following lines refer to the lines of each claim.

Claim 3, Line 1, delete "1 or"

Claim 4, Lines 1-2, change "one ... claims" to --claim 1--

Claim 5, Lines 1-2, change "one ... claims" to --claim 2--

Claim 6, Lines 1-2, change "one ... claims" to --claim 1--

Claim 7, Lines 1-2, change "one ... claims" to --claim 2--

Claim 8, Lines 1-2, change "one ... claims" to --claim 2--

Claim 9, Lines 1-2, change "one ... claims" to --claim 1--

Claim 10, Lines 1-2, change "one ... claims" to --claim 1--

Claim 11, Lines 1-2, change "one ... claims" to --claim 4--

Claim 13, Line 1, delete "or 12"

Claim 15, Line 1, delete "or 14"

R E M A R K S

This amendment is being made simultaneously with filing this application so that no multi-dependent claims exist as of the filing date.

Please enter this amendment prior to calculating the claim filing fee.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Brandt, et al

by: _____

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Description

Display unit

5 The invention relates to a display unit, particularly for a vehicle, having a dial plate and having a display arranged in a region of the dial plate.

10 Such display units are frequently used in modern motor vehicles and are therefore known. The dial plate of the pointer-type instrument is a plate having a cutout with the display arranged behind it. In this instance, the display is designed as an LCD and is inserted in a cutout in an optical waveguide arranged
15 behind the dial plate. As a result of this design, the display is illuminated uniformly.

20 A disadvantage of the known display unit is the presence of a gap between the transparent region and the display. As a result of this, reflections may occur between the display and the transparent region, and these reflections greatly reduce the legibility of the display. In addition, in the known display unit, extraneous light influences can cause shadows on the display, which likewise impairs the legibility of the
25 display. Furthermore, the presentation plane of the display is different than the dial plate plane, which has a scale and/or display symbols; viewed from the direction of an observer, the display is arranged behind the dial plate plane. This has an additional
30 negative effect on the legibility of the display unit.

 The invention is based on the problem of designing a display unit of the type mentioned in the introduction in such a way that it ensures that the display and the dial plate are easy to read.

The invention achieves this object by virtue of the fact that the front of the display, which faces an observer, is arranged in the same plane as the front of the dial plate, which faces the observer.

5 As a result of this design, no reflections can occur between the dial plate and the display, which may be a liquid crystal screen, for example. In addition, the formation of shadows caused by extraneous light influences is reliably prevented. The display unit
10 according to the invention therefore allows the display and the dial plate to be read particularly easily. By virtue of the invention, the display unit has a particularly small physical depth and is also of particularly simple design. The dial plate may be a
15 dial plate of an individual pointer-type instrument or else a dial plate which is common to a number of pointer-type instruments.

The display unit according to the invention comprises a particularly small number of components if
20 a front panel of the display is arranged in a cutout in the dial plate.

The formation of shadows as a result of extraneous light on the display can be reliably prevented, in accordance with another advantageous
25 development of the invention, if a pole filter of the front panel of a display designed as a liquid crystal screen is arranged in the same plane as a film applied to the front of the dial plate.

According to another advantageous development
30 of the invention, the display has a uniform surface if a film which covers the dial plate and the display is designed as a scale and as a pole filter.

According to another advantageous development of the invention, the display can easily be fastened in
35 the dial plate if the display is bonded or clipped in the cutout in the dial plate.

According to another advantageous development of the invention, the display is particularly reliably

held in the dial plate if a rear panel of the display is bonded to the back of the dial plate.

The display unit according to the invention is particularly robust if the front panel of the display
5 is fastened on a support element arranged at the back of the dial plate.

To improve the legibility of the display unit according to the invention further, it helps if the front panel of the display is connected to an optical
10 waveguide of the dial plate so as to form a single component.

In addition, this design means that the display unit according to the invention comprises a particularly small number of components.

15 The display unit according to the invention is illuminated particularly uniformly if the dial plate and the display each have a light source to illuminate them.

The display unit according to the invention has
20 a particularly low weight and is nevertheless highly robust if the dial plate is made of plastic.

Making electrical contact with the display in the display unit and robustly holding the display are particularly simple if the display is a liquid crystal
25 screen and if the front pole filter of the liquid crystal screen is connected to a dial plate film so as to form a single component, the front pole filter being spaced apart from other components of the liquid crystal screen. This additionally ensures that the
30 display unit is very easy to read, and moving constituent parts of the liquid crystal screen away from the dial plate region also affords particularly good possibilities for making electrical contact with - e.g. directly on a printed circuit board of the display
35 unit - and holding the screen - e.g. by holding it in a solid support. Particularly as a result of stimuli which frequently crop up in motor vehicles as a result of vibration, it is essential for high operational reliability and a long service life that the liquid

crystal screen is held securely. According to this advantageous development of the invention, the front pole filter is also a constituent part of the display; it is merely spaced apart from other components of the display. Without the front pole filter, operability of the liquid crystal screen is not guaranteed.

It is particularly advantageous if a lightproof channel is arranged between the front pole filter and the other components of the liquid crystal screen. This prevents stray light which finds its way at the sides into the region between the front pole filter and other components of the display from impairing, distorting or disabling a display.

A particularly robust and durable arrangement of the display in the display unit is achieved if the other components of the liquid crystal screen are held by a frame. In this instance, the frame preferably has the lightproof channel, which reduces the number of components in the display unit and thus increases ease of assembly. According to another advantageous development of the invention, the frame is particularly easy to fasten in the display unit if it is bonded or clipped into a support for the dial plate.

The invention permits numerous embodiments. To clarify its basic principle further, a number of these are illustrated in the drawing and described below. In the drawing,

Figure 1 shows a display unit according to the invention,

Figure 2 shows a sectional illustration through a dial plate of the display unit in Figure 1 along the line II - II, and

Figures 3 - 6 show sectional illustrations of further embodiments of the display unit according to the invention.

Figure 1 shows a display unit for a motor vehicle having a dial plate 1 of a pointer-type instrument and having a display 2. The pointer-type instrument has a scale 3 which is arranged on the dial

plate 1 and over which a pointer 4 is held such that it can rotate. The pointer-type instrument is designed as a tachometer in this case. The display 2 is arranged in a central region of the dial plate 1 and is used to display a time, for example.

Figure 2 uses a sectional illustration along the line II - II in Figure 1 to show that the display 2 is bonded in a cutout 5 in the dial plate 1; alternatively, the display 2 could be clipped into the dial plate 1. The dial plate 1 has an optical waveguide 7 which is covered with a film 6. The film 6 is used to show the scale 3, and to this end may be of translucent design, for example. Alternatively, the film 6 may also be opaque if the scale 3 is produced by cutouts in the film 6. The display 2 is designed as a liquid crystal screen and has a front and a rear panel 8, 9. The liquid crystal screen is shown here only schematically, electrical connections, liquid crystal matter situated between the panels 8, 9, and electrodes for driving the liquid crystal matter, for example, being omitted from the drawing. The panels 8, 9 are each provided with a pole filter 10, 11. The pole filter 10 of the front panel 8 is arranged in the same plane as the film 6 of the dial plate 1. As a result of this, the display unit according to the invention has a smooth surface and is particularly easy to read. By virtue of the invention, no shadows can be formed if extraneous light impinges at the sides on the dial plate 1. In addition, light sources 12, 13 are respectively arranged behind the display 2 and the optical waveguide 7 of the dial plate 1. As a result of this, the dial plate 1 and the display 2 can be backlit independently of one another.

Figure 3 shows a further embodiment of the display unit according to the invention, in which the dial plate 1 and the display 2 are covered by a common film 14. The film 14 is designed as a pole filter of the front panel 8 of the display 2, and at the same time as a scale 3 of the dial plate 1, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4 shows a further embodiment of the display unit according to the invention, in which a rear panel 15 of the display 2 has larger dimensions than a front panel 16 and is bonded to the back of the optical waveguide 7 of the dial plate 1. The optical waveguide 7 of the dial plate 1 has a thickness corresponding to that of the front panel 16 of the display 2. This means that the display 2 and the dial plate 1 have a common smooth surface for an observer.

Figure 5 shows an embodiment of the display unit according to the invention in which a support element 17 is arranged behind the dial plate 1. A front panel 18 of the display 2 is fastened on the support element 17. As in the embodiment in Figure 4, the front panel 18 of the display 2 has a thickness corresponding to that of the optical waveguide 7 of the dial plate 1.

If it is undesirable or unnecessary to backlight the dial plate, e.g. because frontlighting is chosen, then the optical waveguide 7 in the abovementioned exemplary embodiments may be replaced by a support component which does not conduct light, e.g. a plate or a frame.

Figure 6 shows an embodiment in which a dial plate 1 is connected to a front pole filter 25 of a liquid crystal screen 2 so as to form a single component. In this instance, for example, a dial plate film 26 may be designed overall as a pole filter printed with display symbols and/or a scale. Clipped or bonded into a cutout in a support or optical waveguide 7 of the dial plate 1 is a frame 19, which holds a front panel 21, a back panel 22, a back pole filter 32 and a conductive rubber element 20 used for making electrical contact. On the dial plate side, the frame 19 forms a lightproof channel 24, so that operation of the liquid crystal screen 2 is not impaired by light which is incident from the side; this is because the front pole filter 25 is a constituent part of the display designed as a liquid crystal screen, but is spaced apart from the other constituent parts by the

channel 24 of the frame 19. Without the front pole filter 25, the liquid crystal screen would not be able to operate. The order of magnitude of the depth of the channel 24, i.e. the order of magnitude of the spacing
5 between the front pole filter 25 and the front panel 21, is a few millimeters.

The embodiment shown in Figure 6 enables the display 2 to be held in a very robust and vibration-resistant manner, whilst nevertheless ensuring that the
10 dial plate 1 is easy to read. By coloring the dial plate 1 dark gray or black, it is possible to achieve a so-called black-panel effect, which improves discernibility and prevents reflections.

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Patent claims

1. A display unit, particularly for a vehicle, having a dial plate and having a display arranged in a region of the dial plate, wherein the front of the display (2), which faces an observer, is arranged in the same plane as the front of the dial plate (1), which faces the observer.
2. The display unit as claimed in claim 1, wherein a front panel (8, 16, 18) of the display (2) is arranged in a cutout (5) in the dial plate (1).
3. The display unit as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein a pole filter (10) of the front panel (8) of a display (2) designed as a liquid crystal screen is arranged in the same plane as a film (6) applied to the front of the dial plate (1).
4. The display unit as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein a film (14) which covers the dial plate (1) and the display (2) is designed as a scale (3) and as a pole filter (10).
5. The display unit as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the display (2) is bonded or clipped in the cutout (5) in the dial plate (1).
6. The display unit as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein a rear panel (15) of the display (2) is bonded to the back of the dial plate (1).
7. The display unit as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the front panel (18) of the display (2) is connected to an optical waveguide (7) of the dial plate (1) so as to form a single component.
8. The display unit as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the front panel (18) of the

9. The display unit as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the dial plate (1) and the display (2) each have a light source (12, 13) to backlight them.

11. The display unit as claimed in one of the preceding claims, wherein the display (2) is a liquid crystal screen and wherein the front pole filter (25) of the liquid crystal screen is connected to a dial plate film (14) so as to form a single component, the front pole filter (25) being spaced apart from other components (20, 21, 22, 23) of the liquid crystal screen (2).

13. The display unit as claimed in claim 11 or 12, wherein the other components (20, 21, 22, 23) of the liquid crystal screen (2) are held by a frame (19).

15. The display unit as claimed in claim 13 or 14, wherein the frame (19) is bonded or clipped into a support (optical waveguide 7) for the dial plate (1).

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Abstract

Display unit

In a display unit for a motor vehicle, a display (2) designed as an LCD is arranged in the same plane as a dial plate (1) of a pointer-type instrument. For this purpose, the dial plate (1) has a cutout into which the display (2) is bonded. This makes the display (2) and the dial plate (1) particularly easy to read.

(Figure 1)

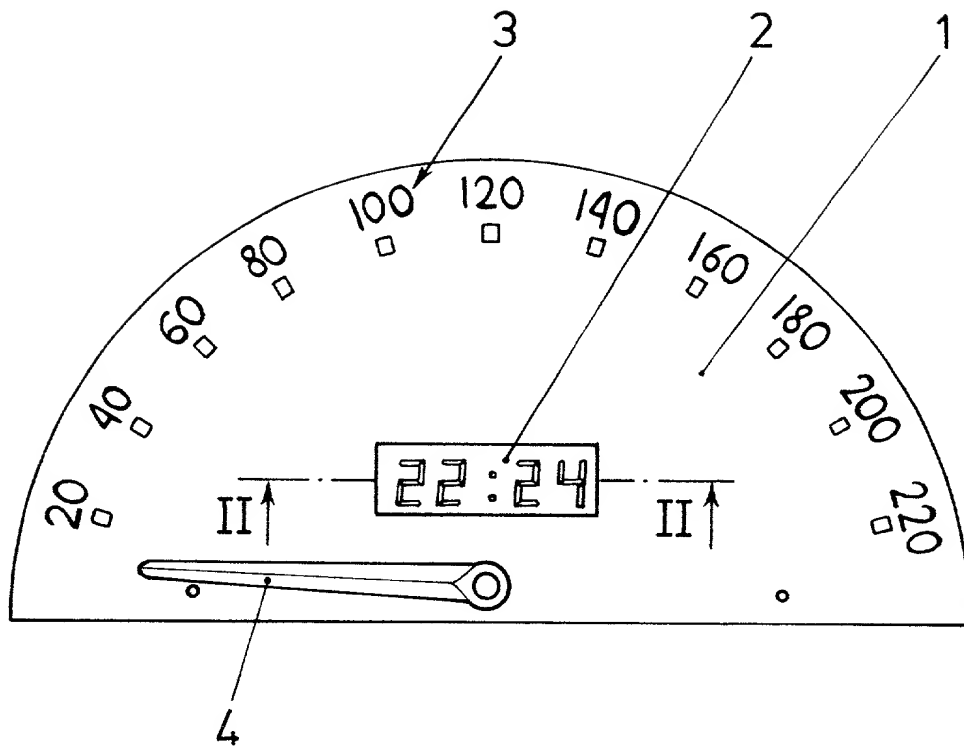


Fig. 1

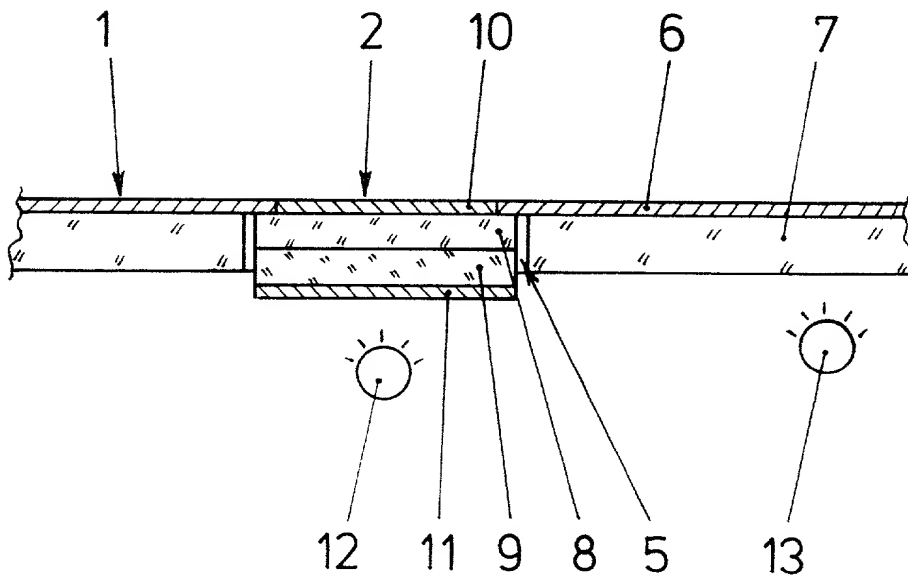


Fig. 2

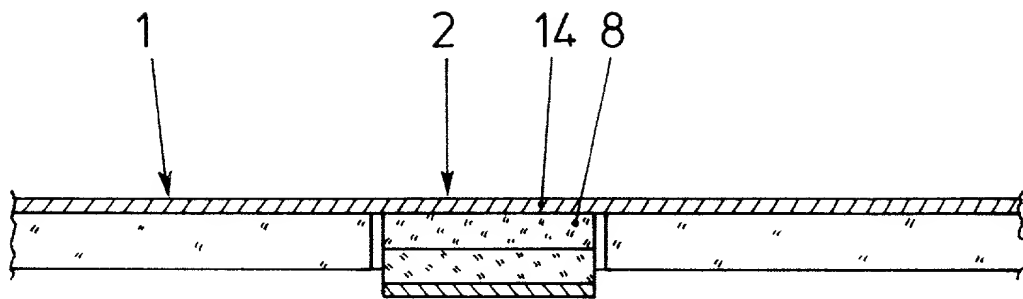


Fig. 3

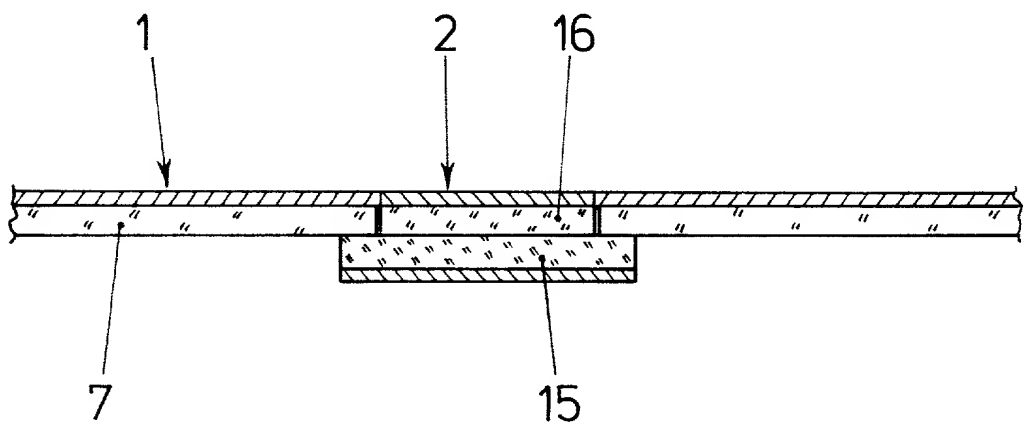


Fig. 4

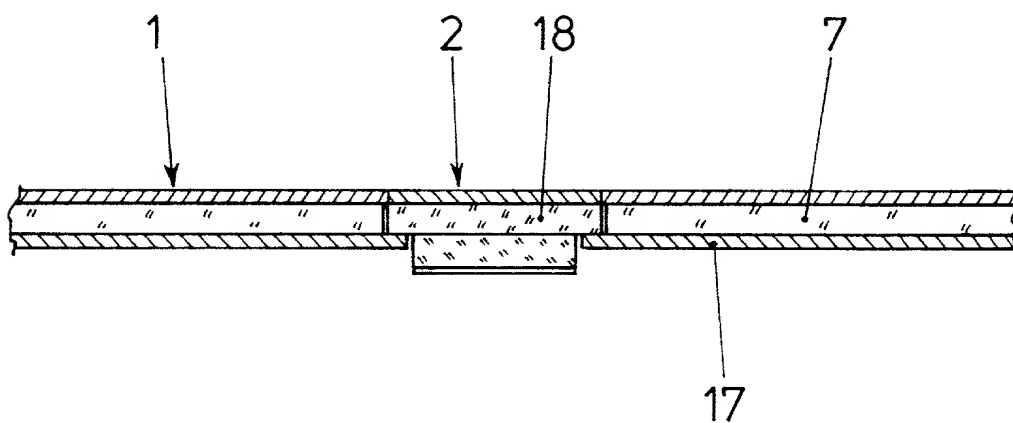


Fig. 5

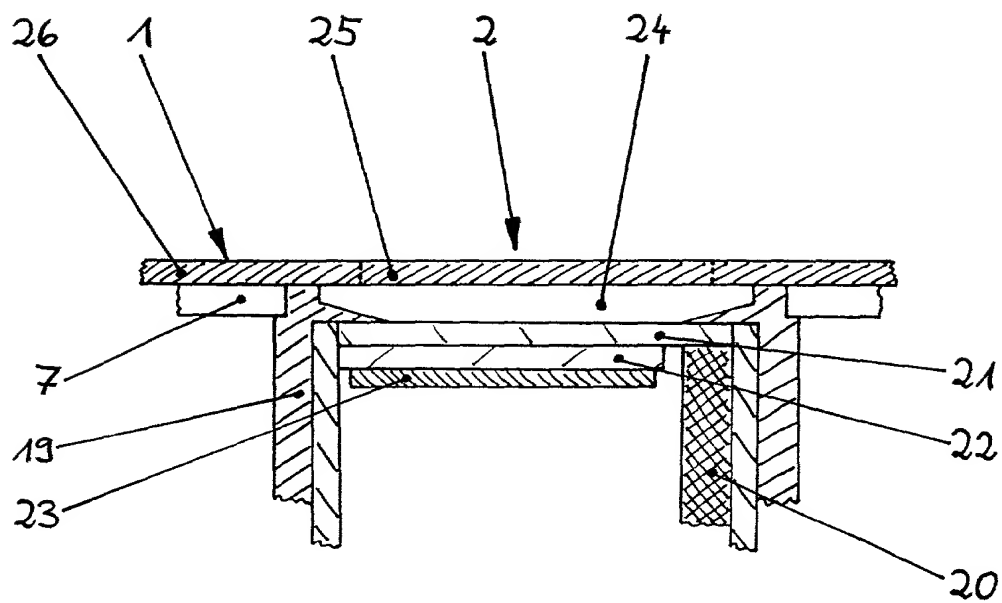


Fig. 6

DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION

Docket Number (Optional)

3557 US

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

PAGE 1 OF 2

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled Display unit, the specification of which

is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application Number or PCT International Application Number _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

| (Number) | (Country) | (Day/Month/Year Filed) | Priority Claimed |
|--------------|-----------|------------------------|---|
| 197 58 383.0 | Germany | 23/12/1997 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ____ | ____ | ____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ____ | ____ | ____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| (Application Number) | (Filing Date) | (Status - patented, pending, abandoned) |
|----------------------|---------------|---|

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| (Application Number) | (Filing Date) | (Status - patented, pending, abandoned) |
|----------------------|---------------|---|

I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

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Martin A. Farber at telephone number (212) 758-2878
 Address all correspondence to Martin A. Farber, 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 473
New York, NY 10017

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of sole or first inventor (given name, family name) Peter Brandt

Inventor's signature _____ Date _____

Residence Berliner Str. 41, Babenhausen, Germany Citizenship GermanyPost Office Address Berliner Str. 41, 64832 Babenhausen, GermanyFull name of second joint inventor, if any (given name, family name) Gerd Cezanne

Second inventor's signature _____ Date _____

Residence Pfingstbrunnen-Str. 68, Schwalbach Citizenship GermanyPost Office Address Pfingstbrunnen-Str. 68, 65824 Schwalbach, Germany

☒ Additional inventors are being named on a separate sheet attached hereto.

DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION

Docket Number (Optional)
3557 US

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

PAGE 2 OF 2

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled
Display unit, the specification of which

is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application Number or PCT International Application
Number _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

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Prior Foreign Application(s)

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------------|---|
| <u>197 58 383.0</u> | <u>Germany</u> | <u>23/12/1997</u> | Priority Claimed |
| (Number) | (Country) | (Day/Month/Year Filed) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| (Number) | (Country) | (Day/Month/Year Filed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| (Number) | (Country) | (Day/Month/Year Filed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

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| | | |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| (Application Number) | (Filing Date) | (Status - patented, pending, abandoned) |

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| (Application Number) | (Filing Date) | (Status - patented, pending, abandoned) |

I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

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| Address all correspondence to | <u>Martin A. Farber, 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 473</u> |
| | <u>New York, NY 10017</u> |

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of ^{third joint} sole inventor (given name, family name) Norbert May

Inventor's signature _____ Date _____

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Second inventor's signature _____ Date _____

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